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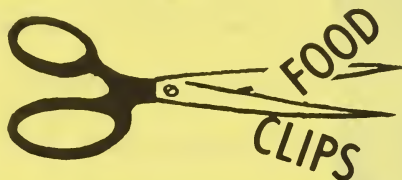
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Food and Home Notes

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATION WASHINGTON, D. C.

July 29, 1974



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Sweet cherries should be prepared quickly for the freezer if you are to avoid color and flavor changes. Red varieties are best for freezing. If you don't remove the pits, you may get an almond-like flavor in your frozen cherries.

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The sirup pack is preferred for berries to be served uncooked. Berries -- blueberries, elderberries, and huckleberries -- frozen unsweetened are satisfactory for cooking, according to USDA.

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Visual qualities of nutmeats can be judged in transparent packages. If nutmeats look limp, rubbery, dark, or kernels appear shriveled -- they may be stale. They should be plump and fairly uniform in color and size according to Agricultural Research Service of USDA.

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Buying a coconut? It should be heavy for its size. Avoid cracked coconuts -- especially with wet, moldy eyes!

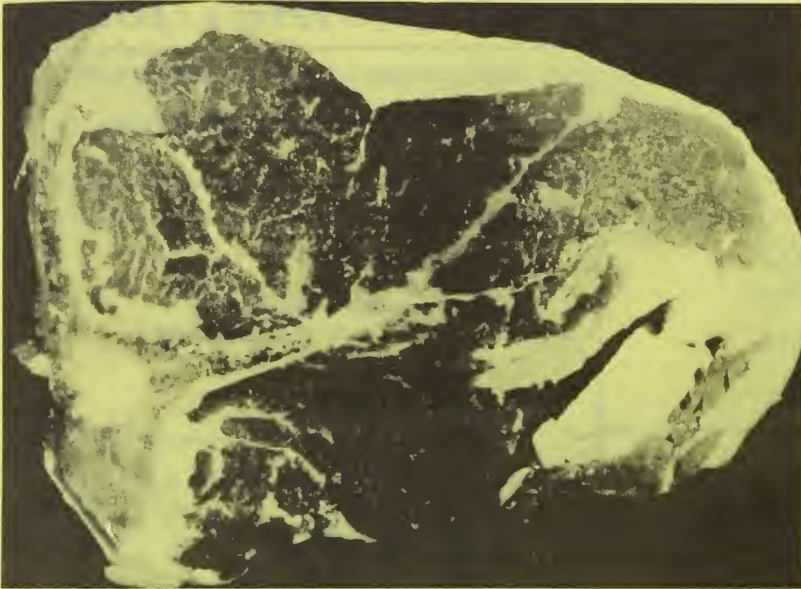
AGING — and Cheddar Cheese

Cheddar cheese usually is made from sweet, whole cow's milk and takes from 1 to 12 months to ripen. But -- if cheddar is made from low-lactose milk, it may not take as long to age -- to develop its body, flavor and texture. In fact, by using low-lactose milk the ripening process may be accelerated by at least one or two months according to agricultural research scientists at U.S. Department of Agriculture.

A new experimental process with milk poured into a cheese vat, a powdered enzyme (called "lactase") is added to it. While the cheese curd is cooking and draining, the lactase breaks down the milk sugar lactose into two simpler sugars, glucose and galactose. With the carbohydrate in a new form (that of glucose and galactose) aging of the curd appears to be significantly accelerated. This may be because hydrolysis of the lactose, which is conventionally part of the aging process, has already taken place when the curd is placed into the aging chamber.

Cheddar cheese, by this faster-ripening method, has been made in the laboratory and on a pilot scale. Experimental large scale processing will be undertaken soon.

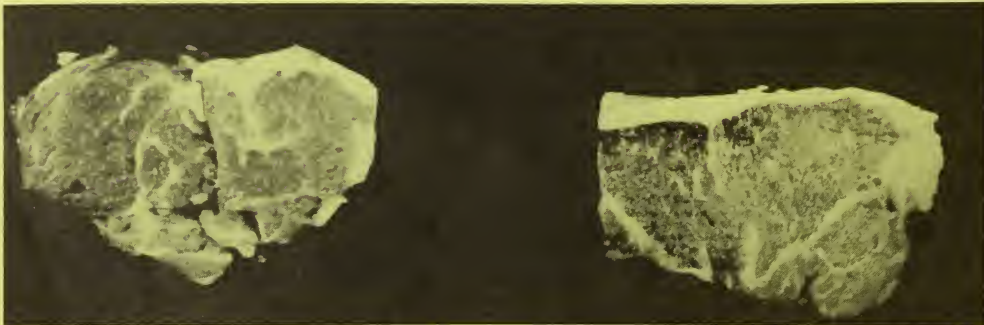
One pound T-bone - From this:



--- removing bones and fat (slightly less than half)



--- leaves two 3-ounce portions of cooked meat.



BUYING MEAT

— at the "Cost Per Serving"

Are you a selective shopper at the meat counter? It helps if you are --- according to the Extension Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. If you know something about the cost per serving of meat, you can then figure the cost per pound. Boneless cuts with little waste appear expensive, but they are not so costly when figured on a "CPS" -- which actually is a more useful figure (than cost per pound). Recommended consumption in a balanced diet is two three-ounce servings daily, according to specialists at the University of Minnesota. As meat cuts vary in the amount of bone, fat, and connective tissue or gristle, the number of three ounce cooked portions per pound will also vary.

USDA statistics indicate that the average family in the United States spends approximately one-third or 33¢ of every food dollar for meat -- so obviously the amount you spend in buying meat is of major importance in your food budget. Comparing meat on the basis of cost per serving gives a much better comparison of true meat costs because two different cuts may cost the same, per pound --- but, cost per serving may be very different. An estimate of the number of servings per pound is based on ground and stew meat (4 servings), boneless steaks and roasts (3 servings), some bone (2 servings), and bony and fatty meat (only 1 serving).

A new slide set and narrative guide on figuring the cost per serving of meat has been developed by the Agricultural Extension Service at the University of Minnesota, in cooperation with USDA. The slide set (No. 904) consists of 22 slides and a syllabus and may be ordered for \$6.00 from Visual Aide, Dept. of Information and Ag Journalism, Coffee Hall, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minn. 55108.

THE CALL OF — Outdoor Cooking

If those long, lazy evenings and warm weather are making you less anxious to respond enthusiastically to the call of the outdoor barbecue -- relent and be a summer-time chef. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service, beef is in good supply to enhance your barbecue menu.

Follow a few simple rules to insure a successful barbecue. First, for plenty of good, juicy flavor, choose steaks at least 1½ inches thick, or shape the hamburger patties ¾ inches or more thick. For the less tender cuts (chuck or round), the meat can be marinated for several hours in a refrigerator before broiling. A delicious and easy-to-prepare marinade can be made by combining favorite seasonings with a mixture of half oil and half vinegar or lemon juice.

Start the fire 30 to 45 minutes ahead. When a fine gray ash covers the coals, spread them about an inch apart, making sure no two touch. Adjust the grill so that the meat will be six to eight inches above the coals, permitting an even flow of heat. Raise the grill if the meat gets too hot.

NOTE: More on GYPSY MOTH infestation

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service suggested recently in an item in Food and Home Notes that to protect trees and ornamental shrubs from gypsy moth infestation, you put a wide band of creosote or a sticky substance called "tangle foot" around the tree trunks to trap the caterpillars. However, creosote should be used only in direct application to individual egg masses -- otherwise, creosote may harm your tree. The sticky substance called "tangle foot" should be used to stop moving caterpillars, and will not harm your tree, according to APHIS specialists.

NOTE: Additional information for the MEDIA and photographs (when applicable) may be obtained from: Shirley Wagener, Editor of Food and Home Notes, Room 535A, Office of Communication/Press Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250. Or telephone 202-447-5898.
